

DEMOCRATS WILL NOT BE SILENCED

(Ms. WILSON of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we have a long to-do list before you can leave for the summer recess: we have got to pass legislation to prevent gun violence; we have got to pass legislation to fight the spread of Zika; we have got to pass legislation to address the Flint water crisis and to fund the opioid treatment plans. The clock is ticking—tick, tick, tick—and none of these will get done because you are getting ready for the longest summer recess in at least 60 years without addressing the very pressing issues that Americans really care about.

Republicans' inaction will not prevent Democrats from reminding the entire American Republic that we have got to do the right thing. During the next 7 weeks, we will continue to demand a vote on commonsense measures to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and terrorists. Hashtag, there are too many damned guns in America today.

□ 1600

CONGRATULATING TIMOTHY THEODORE DUNCAN

(Ms. PLASKETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of so many young African American males who are fearful for their lives, who believe that America doesn't realize the exemplary lives that they each live.

I also rise to give an example of one African American male who gives the Virgin Islands tremendous pride today. I am here to honor Virgin Islands native and the greatest power forward of all time, Timothy Theodore Duncan, on his retirement from the National Basketball Association.

Throughout his storied 19-year career, Tim Duncan has won the NBA Rookie of the Year Award, five NBA championship titles, three NBA Final MVP awards, two NBA Most Valuable Player awards, and has earned the distinction of all-time leading scorer for his San Antonio Spurs.

The 15-time NBA All Star is an inspiration to many young Virgin Islanders and, indeed, Americans all over this country and is an integral figure in his own community for his efforts toward promoting interscholastic athletics and education. He is an exemplary gentleman, unselfish on and off the court.

The Virgin Islands community thanks him for his 19-year career in the NBA. We want to show him as an example of what can happen if one individual like himself can be on a street safely here in the United States, the great things that they can do.

THANKING MY CONGRESSIONAL STAFF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GIBSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GIBSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my hard-working staff.

Over the past 6 years, I have had the honor and privilege to serve in this House of Representatives. At the end of this term, my time of service as a Member in this body will come to a close, as I honor my self-imposed term-limit pledge.

As I reflect on my congressional service, there has been a constant throughout this time. The first is my wonderful family. And the second is my incredible, selfless staff who have worked with me to serve the good people of our district.

We have a saying in our office, that we only hire people who love people. This may sound simple, but it is amazing, the difference it can make when you have a team of people dedicated to helping others. Every day, they exhibit compassion, kindness, patience, and really take the time to listen to our constituents.

For some of my staff, that was their first job out of college. More than a few started as an intern with us. For others, this job was a return from retirement, yet another chapter in a lifetime of service to this great Nation.

So many of our staff have stayed the entire 6 years, a loyalty for which I am deeply grateful. And those who have moved on have continued to excel, with achievements of which I am very proud. A couple are now on their well-deserved retirement.

When we close out our term, my team will have left a legacy of real, meaningful service to the people of New York and to this Nation. Their accomplishments are far too numerous to name, but I just want to highlight a very small sampling of the work they have accomplished.

Here in the House, we have been part of the effort to ensure our Armed Forces, our servicemen and -women, have the resources and support they need for the missions we ask of them. We have fought tireless battles to help all of our veterans, including our Blue Water Navy veterans who have been left out of Agent Orange coverage.

We have helped improve mental health care and made significant progress combating the scourge of opiate addiction that is devastating our communities. We have helped both our family farms and our small businesses and improved health care for seniors.

We passed the first bill that addresses Lyme disease and other tickborne illnesses. And we fought to empower students and teachers and to ensure our students weren't burdened with onerous, high-stakes testing in our schools.

Mr. Speaker, in our district, when we were hit with the devastating storms—Hurricanes Irene, Lee, and Sandy—my staff joined me on the front lines, from helping residents in the immediate aftermath of the storms to ensuring they received the assistance they needed to recover over the following years. We were committed to ensuring every community came back stronger than they were the day before the storm.

And we have continued other efforts. We have helped expand broadband access, and we have helped with conservation efforts. We have helped fix our roads and bridges and advocated for a countless number of grants to be awarded to our local businesses, nonprofits, fire departments, and the like.

My staff has also completed over 7,000 cases for my constituents. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you we have had so many constituents come up to my wife, Mary Jo, and I and tell us about the work that our staff has done that, in many cases, helped change their lives.

They are exceptional people, one and all. They are model public servants. I want to close with reading their names into our CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for this day so that they get a small piece of the recognition they so richly deserve.

Before I do, Mr. Speaker, I also want to say thank you to each and every one of them and their families. Our communities are strong and our Nation is better because of their service.

Mr. Speaker, the members of Team Gibson, in alphabetical order: Robert Allard; Allison Argust; Sergeant First Class Dennis Bartow, U.S. Army National Guard; Katherine Better; Jeffrey Bishop; Steven Bulger, my district director; Paula Brown; Sergeant First Class (Retired) George Christian, U.S. Army National Guard; Nicholas Czajka; Sergeant First Class (Retired) Kathy Fallon, U.S. Army National Guard; Todd Felter; Remy Fortin; Brad Gentile; Nathan Gil; William Gonzales, New York State Trooper, retired; James Haggerty, United States Marine Corps, Korean war; Ridge Harris; Patricia Hohmann; Colonel Stephen Ledbetter, U.S. Army; Joseph Levi, a wounded Army combat veteran; Shay Mason; Major Patrick McGuigan, U.S. Army; Ann Mueller; Pdraic O'Brien, now a New York State Trooper; Lieutenant Colonel Curt Owens, United States Army Reserves; Barbara Palmer; Megan Paulsen; Corinne Boughton Penston; Duane Postupak; Patricia Raucci; Peter Ryan; Brian Scarlett; Major Matthew Schardt, U.S. Army; Christine Schiff; Rebecca Shaw; Matthew Sheehy; Steven Stallmer; Theodore Stephan; Major Ricardo Turner, U.S. Army; Stephanie Valle, my chief of staff; Carol Waller; Mark Westcott; Anthony Zampelli; and Patrick Ziegler.

May God bless them all.

I yield back the balance of my time.

ISSUES OF THE WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my dear friend from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

IN MEMORY OF SHARON RUNNER

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for so graciously allowing me the time here today. Indeed, it is a timely moment, and I want to share it with the American people.

Indeed, it has been a difficult week for California and for the leadership of women who we have seen come forward in our State over recent years, especially in the political arena.

My colleague Representative MIMI WALTERS from southern California earlier this week paid tribute to Marian Bergeson, a great political leader in our State in her time who we lost several days ago.

Well, now we have lost another gem, and that is Sharon Oden Runner. I learned of her passing this morning.

She underwent, some years ago, a very, very daring and amazing lung transplant to overcome the condition she had. She fought hard all these years and did quite well with that until recent times.

So this tribute today to her is for her, her family, and that memory.

Sharon and I came up together in the California State Legislature. Back in 2002, we both won terms in the State Assembly. She was just a good pal right out of the chute there.

As new freshman members, we were getting to know our way around Sacramento and the State legislative process. Several of the freshman bonded. There was a pack of us guys and Sharon, you know, because there are a lot more guys in politics, it seems.

So Sharon, being just a few years older than the rest of us guys, she kind of seemed like the one that was keeping us a little more in line as we would go about doing our business in the State legislature, cutting up a little bit here and there once in a while amidst the seriousness or at the events you do around town at night meeting other people and such.

So I soon dubbed her "Ma Runner," lovingly and affectionately, and she took that okay. And she was the one who would say, You boys, now, you stay in line here, okay?

But we all had a lot of fun together and worked hard together and fought the battles together in the California legislative process.

It was really fun to see her ascend. When our current majority leader here, KEVIN MCCARTHY, became our assembly leader there, Sharon ascended right there beside him as the assistant leader for the Republicans as well. And she really did well in that role and was effective and just really good to get along with and made sure that all the

members had what they needed in order to do well.

Sharon's spirit was one of always being so positive, reaching out to everybody. She worked to get more women elected to the legislature as well.

And she was one with very strong moral convictions as well, to make sure that her faith in God was something that she brought forward with her policy and was something that wasn't very far away in how she conducted herself and for her family and for those that she came into contact with.

So we had that opportunity to serve 6 years together in the State Assembly. And then, with term limits being what they are, we soon met up again in that legislative role over on the California State Senate side.

Now, at that point, Sharon was again struggling with her lung battles there and got that amazing lung transplant, that life that was given to her by a donor that she carried forward for these years until finally the issues became too complex. And, again, we lost her this morning.

So our hearts do go out to George, Micah, Bekah, all of her friends, all of her extended family. Those who had a chance to know her and were touched and graced by her, we are better for it. We know that we will always cherish the memories.

George and Sharon had a unique time together as the first husband-wife team in the California State Legislature. He was in the Senate for a while, and she was in the Assembly. A lot of history was made by them through measures they were able to put on the ballot, the things they always fought for morally and policy-wise. They will always be remembered as working together.

Now, as George soldiers on, our hearts are with you. We wish you God's strength and peace and only the sweetest memories to your whole family.

We remember Sharon today. God bless her, and God bless her memory.

□ 1615

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I do so much appreciate my friend, DOUG LAMALFA, a very touching tribute to what is obviously just a wonderful individual that we will be missing.

For some time now the Democrats have been doing 1-minute speeches. On the last day we vote during the week, we are allowed to have unlimited 1-minute speeches, and for—I don't know—2 or 3 hours, my friends across the aisle have been doing 1-minute speeches, and I am so pleased that they are doing that. I think that is terrific. That is so much better than taking away the civil rights of people who have the right to assemble on the floor, to have sessions, to vote on bills, to debate bills because the previous violations of the rules by my friends across the aisle were just unprecedented.

I would like to commend our Speaker for this aspect, comparing what he did and did not do today compared to what

Speaker PELOSI did the last day of our session in July of 2008 because today I know leadership and staff saw the massive number of Democrats assembled to give speeches here, and the rule allows for that. There was no effort to shut down debate, gavel us out early, but that is exactly what Speaker NANCY PELOSI did in July of 2008.

We had assembled a group. It may not have been quite as big as the Democrats had today, but we had a group over here, and under the rules at that time, they were 5-minute speeches, which could still be done, but they chose 1-minutes. We signed up for 5-minute speeches. When the Speaker NANCY PELOSI saw a number of Republicans, appropriately under the rule, here in order, signed up. We weren't just sitting there. We had signed up and were sitting in order as we are supposed to. She immediately gavelled down the proceeding early, violated the rule that allowed us to speak in the order, just as the Democrats did today, and this is the way it is supposed to be.

Yet, earlier this month we had our friends across the aisle—and I haven't seen this written up much, but they took positions at their microphones and at the Republican microphones. We tried to go into session, and we even had Democrats not only sitting where Republicans were supposed to be seated on the Republican side, we had them grasp microphones to prevent Republicans from being able to be recognized.

Finally, in the wee hours, we had the Speaker recognize a Republican chairman. He couldn't get a microphone. He is standing over here. Why? Because of the violation of the rules as the Democrats tried—not just tried. They were preventing Republicans from exercising their civil rights under Jefferson's rules of the House, under congressional rules, and our constituents had a right to be heard, just as our friends across the aisle had a right to be heard today.

Now, in those 1-minute speeches, the massive array we heard this afternoon, there were a few common themes, and I think that is wonderful. Football is my favorite sport. I enjoyed it in junior high, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12th grade, enjoyed every year of it. It is such a team sport.

We saw a team acting in concert, working together. They all had their talking points. They all hit them and hit them hard. Some were very unfair, but they, from their standpoint, were acting as a team. But for one thing, they kept using the term "vacation," that the House is going on vacation. One said a month vacation, I think, but I know I heard one say 7-week vacation, another one said 8-week vacation. They weren't all together on how long they were attributing to be vacation.

I have told some of my friends at FOX News and different news commentators that when you criticize the month of August, that is traditionally, as I understand it—going back to the